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NRO REVIEW COMPLETED

State Department review
completed

*has been
& indicated he
thinks no action
is necessary*

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WARNING

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DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
WASHINGTON

21 January 1964

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MEMORANDUM FOR: State - Secretary Rusk
Defense - Secretary McNamara
CIA - Mr. McCone
ACDA - Mr. Fisher
White House - Mr. McGeorge Bundy
Dr. Wiesner
Dr. Welsh
Mr. Johnson
NASA - Mr. Webb
USIA - Mr. Murrow

SUBJECT : Possible Disclosure of Satellite
Reconnaissance

Conclusions:

Following discussions among your representatives, we have concluded that no additional action to disseminate more knowledge of our satellite reconnaissance capability is required at this time in support of our disarmament and other policies.

This memorandum summarizes our findings on the nature of present official and unofficial knowledge of U. S. satellite reconnaissance, and on ways in which wider knowledge might affect allied and Soviet acceptance of our disarmament proposals.

State of Allied Knowledge of U. S. Satellite Reconnaissance Program:

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Non-Bloc Attitudes:

We have examined NATO and other non-Bloc press coverage of reconnaissance satellites but, with the exception of the U. S. press, find nothing of significance. We plan to query selected U. S. Embassies in an effort to determine more clearly the level of public and official awareness of the U. S. satellite program and attitudes toward it. If our experience with recent proceedings of the UN Outer Space Committee is a valid indicator, most non-Bloc states tend to accept space reconnaissance as a fact of life and to view attendant political considerations with indifference. This situation is satisfactory from our standpoint.

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Soviet Statements on and Awareness of U. S. Satellite Reconnaissance Program:

Over the past 18 months we have noted a decline in Soviet press articles and statements on U. S. satellite reconnaissance. The Soviet press regularly reports "secret" launches of U. S. "spy" satellites, but these are only two or three sentence summaries of U. S. press agency stories, usually without Soviet comment. We have seen little else in the Soviet press since last summer on any aspect of reconnaissance satellites, and certainly nothing to compare either with earlier Soviet assaults on such activity or with recent U. S. articles on this subject. There has been no Soviet commentary yet on these U. S. articles advertng to extensive U. S. space reconnaissance operations.

In the UN Outer Space Committee negotiations, the Soviets have relaxed (but not abandoned) their position of long standing on banning reconnaissance satellites, at least to the extent of making agreement possible last fall on general principles of space law, without reference to reconnaissance. It is clear that the Soviets have taken this action without prejudice to future negotiations, but it does represent a significant shift in Soviet tactics.

The new Soviet attitude may result in part from experience they have acquired with reconnaissance satellites. In the last year the USSR has launched a large number of recoverable satellites, some of which carried low resolution cameras.

It is quite possible, given the 10,000 lb. weight of the Soviet COSMOS vehicles, that higher resolution cameras were aboard as well. Khrushchev hinted as much when he told Spaak last summer that the Soviets were photographing the U. S. and even offered to show Spaak some pictures. Adzhubey is reported to have made a similar statement in Finland in September 1963.

On the basis of the inconclusive evidence we have acquired in the last year or so, we believe that (a) the Soviets are certainly aware of the U. S. program, although probably still uncertain of its precise scope and quality; (b) they are prepared for the moment to live with it, in part because there is no feasible alternative open to them

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to stop it, and (c) they are probably engaged in a reconnaissance effort of their own. As they acquire first hand experience, their awareness of the strength and weaknesses of space reconnaissance may have some influence on their future proposals in space and disarmament matters.

Relationship of Satellite Reconnaissance to Current U. S. Disarmament Proposals:

At Tab B is a study, prepared by ACDA, attempting to gauge the impact of satellite photography on the principal current arms control proposals under consideration in ACDA, and on the contribution satellites can make in monitoring agreements already in effect, i.e., the test ban and the resolution against bombs in orbit.

A separable first stage proposal on strategic nuclear delivery vehicles and production cutoff would, of course, be heavily dependent on our unilateral reconnaissance capabilities. The degree of this dependency may well have to be revealed in part to make a separable first stage proposal acceptable to our Allies and domestically. Until a U. S. position on this matter is fully worked out, however, we cannot usefully anticipate possible solutions to this problem.

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Enclosures:

Tab A - List of Non-U. S. Officials Briefed on U. S. Satellite Reconnaissance Program.

Tab B - The Contribution of Satellite Photography to the Verification of Current Arms Control and Disarmament Proposals.

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CC: Defense - Mr. William Bundy
Air Force - Dr. McMillan
ACDA - Dr. Scoville
CIA - Dr. Wheelon ✓
Mr. Cline
State - Amb. Thompson
Mr. Chayes
Mr. Hughes

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14 January 1964

The Contribution of Satellite Photography to the
Verification of Current Arms Control and
Disarmament Proposals

Problem

The United States has developed an observation satellite system which is now able to furnish reasonable quality and reasonably timely photography of any area in the world which may be of interest. This unilateral capability effectively provides the "open skies" coverage of the USSR which was requested by President Eisenhower in 1955 as part of a disarmament agreement. It is clear that possession of this photography changes the requirements for ground or other types of inspection as part of the verification of a number of different proposed arms control agreements although it does not obviate the need for complementary means of data collection. This brief discussion has been prepared as an attempt to gauge the impact of satellite photography on the principal current arms control proposals under consideration in the U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

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2. Strategic Nuclear Delivery Vehicles, Interim Reduction and Production Cut-off.

The current proposal specifies armament reductions and curtailment of test and production for the following major strategic weapons categories: ICBMs and IRBM/MRBMs; heavy and medium bomber aircraft with air-to-surface missiles; submarines equipped to deliver weapons by ballistic or cruise missiles; and ABMs.

Strategic delivery systems are vulnerable to identification and monitoring by photographic satellites during test, production and deployment.

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c. Heavy

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